

ABSTRACT

Information related to signal quality on the downstream and upstream paths (104) in a cable network may be monitored (116, 208) at selected ones of a plurality of set-top boxes (110) and sent by the set-top box to the headend (102) as it is collected, or when the set-top box is polled by the headend. The information may be collected with the set-top box is in an idle state (204), by the set-top box tuning through the channels in the channel map (206) and by applying a time stamp to the information (208). Ping messages may be transmitted from the set-top box to the headend and back to the set-top box. Methods and apparatus are disclosed.

October 13, 2003